

CATHOLIC COMMISSION PERVERTS MARTYR STATISTICS

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The Commission of New Martyrs of the Vatican Jubilee Committee has published statistics on the number of martyrs that are grossly inaccurate and that downplay the effect of Rome's Inquisition. The 10 "experts" on the committee were appointed a few years ago by Pope John Paul II and were tasked with gathering information on 20th century martyrs.

At a symposium in Rome on May 7, 2000, designed by the Pope as Jubilee Martyrs' Day, the Committee reported that out of a total of 40 million Christian martyrs that have died for their faith, almost 27 million were killed in the 20th century. The Committee cited statistics published by Christian World Encyclopedia editor David B. Barrett.

These statistics are inaccurate. While no one knows exactly how many Christians have died for their faith since the beginning of the church age, the Barrett statistics fly in the face of diligent research that has been done in the past.

For example, it has been estimated by careful and reputed historians of the Catholic Inquisition that 50 million people were slaughtered for the crime of "heresy" by Roman persecutors between the A.D. 606 and the middle of the 19th century.

This is the number cited by John Dowling, who published the classic "History of Romanism" in 1847 (book VIII, chapter 1, footnote 1). Only seven years after its first printing, it could be said of Dowling's book, "it has already obtained a circulation much more extensive than any other large volume ever published in America, upon the subject of which it treats; or perhaps in England, with the exception of Fox's Book of Martyrs."

Clark's Martyrology counts the number of Waldensian martyrs during the first half of the 13th century in France alone at two million. From A.D. 1160-1560 the Waldensians that dwelt in the Italian Alps were visited with 36 different fierce persecutions that spared neither age nor sex (Thomas Armitage, A History of the Baptists, "Post-Apostolic Times -- The Waldensians," 1890). They were almost completely destroyed as a people and most of their literary record was erased from the face of the earth.

From the year 1540 to 1570 “it is proved by national authentic testimony, that nearly one million of Protestants were publicly put to death in various countries in Europe, besides all those who were privately destroyed, and of whom no human record exists” (J.P. Callender, Illustrations of Popery, 1838, p. 400).

Catholic historian Vergerius admits gleefully that during the Pontificate of Pope Paul IV (1555-1559) “the Inquisition alone, by tortures, starvation, or the fire, murdered more than 150,000 Protestants.”

These are only small samples of the brutality which was poured out upon “dissident” Christians by the Roman Catholic church during the Inquisition.

We would also seriously question Barrett’s statistics of 20th-century martyrs. He claims that 27 million died in that century, particularly at the hands of Communist, Nazi, and Islamic regimes. We doubt that the figure is that large, but even if it is true, it is only about half of the number who perished under Rome’s Inquisition.

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